



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Three appointed to the Washington Fairs Commission

OLYMPIA – Jim Jesernig, director of the state Department of Agriculture, today announced the appointments of three new Washington Fairs Commissioners. Each will serve a three-year term. The seven-member Fairs Commission advises Jesernig on agricultural fair law. Among other duties, each year commissioners evaluate fairs and youth shows and help to prepare the merit rating used to determine funding allocations.

Nancy Ruark of Pomeroy will represent Eastern Washington fairs. She has a farming background and is a retired schoolteacher. She has been actively involved with fairs and the Washington State Fairs Association as a board member and president.

Carole Hansen of Mukilteo will represent Western Washington fairs. She is a retired County Extension Agent from Snohomish County. She has been actively involved with 4-H.

Jay Wood of Tumwater will serve as member-at-large. A retired state director for Vocational Technical Education at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Wood is a member and president of the Tumwater School Board. Barry Halvorson of Wapato, who served in the member-at-large position, was reassigned to represent Eastern Washington fairs.

In other business, Ken Milholland of Tenino was elected chairman. Leaving the commission after serving two three-year terms are Chairman Daphne Eshom of Port Angeles, Karen Close of Yakima, and L. Evan Brooks of Medical Lake.

Washington has the highest per capita rate of fair visits in the nation. An estimated 5 million people are expected to attend fairs this year. In 1999 Washington fairs featured nearly 79,000 exhibitors. Of those, 55,000 were youths. The fair fund supports 38 county fairs, 21 community fairs, 12 youth shows and the Urban King County 4-H fair.

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